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619 [197] others. This differentiated them clearly from all neighbouring tribes.

[575] [609] B. CEREMONIAL. A member of a secret society in any of the above towns was accepted as a member in any other one. A person of another tribe, even if known to belong to a comparable society, was treated as an uninitiated person.

C. ORIGIN AND RELIGION. The people of Bella Coola, *Tăl·ĭo*, and Kimsquit felt themselves to be akin through acceptance of the fact that their ancestors had been created together in the beginning of time. This marked them off with [771] great clearness from all other tribes, especially from the Carriers of the interior. This belief formed a sentimental and religious bond of great strength.

NEIGHBOURING TRIBES

648 It is desirable to describe, briefly, the tribes with which the Bella Coola came in contact.

THE CARRIERS

East of Bella Coola, amid the mountains of the interior, roved the Carriers. In summer they often came down to the river valley to fish or trade for salmon, and in winter they were sometimes forced by cold and starvation again to visit the Bella Coola, Bella Bella, or Rivers Inlet people. There was a [563] good deal of intermarriage between them and the inhabitants of the upper valley, so that the wanderers were able to spend the cold months with relatives. None the less, the Bella Coola [180] considered these people utterly foreign in habits and beliefs, [578] and to call a man a "Carrier" was, and still is, a deadly insult. The Carriers lacked the rich ceremonial life of the coastal peoples who, therefore, regarded them with scorn and con- [796] tempt. The presence of a few of the much-despised Carriers was, however, almost necessary to the correct performance of the winter dances since they were uninitiated spectators whom it was necessary to impress and delude.

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Bella bella NE5

BC 648

THE BELLA BELLA

West of Bella Coola lived the Bella Bella, known as *ułḳwlāsɪmχ*. Although linguistic differences prevented free exchange of ideas, and active hostility was not unknown, there was considerable intermarriage between the two tribes. The Bella Coola recognized the similarity of culture between them; in fact, whereas a Carrier was despised for lack of knowledge of ceremonial and dramatic matters, a Bella Bella was respected for his superior lore in that respect. The Bella Coola believe that many of their rites have been obtained from them.

BB 101 563

BC 563 186

The chief Bella Bella villages are said to have been: *Ḳwaɪna*, on "Kwatna" Bay; *Nā'mu*, at "Namu"; *Ḳwiyai*, four miles from the last-mentioned; *Nulam*.

BB 361 191 563

At *Ḳwaɪna*, the nearest settlement, so many of the people spoke Bella Coola that it was practically bilingual. There had been so many intermarriages for generations that the people were not considered foreigners; in fact, Boas includes it among Bella Coola villages (p. 48). There were seven villages on Kwatna Inlet and the Kwatna River which flows in from the south-east.

BC 563 648

(1) *Sinułkemitł*, "Where It Spoke": a small outpost on the eastern shore of Kwatna Inlet near the entrance. There may once have been a permanent settlement at the site, but for many years it was used only as a look-out station when raiders were expected.

BB 173 361

It is said that on one occasion, long, long ago, a party of Kwatna people was encamped at this spot, waiting for enemy raiders whose approach had been reported. They did not appear when expected and one of the watchers, wearied by the long wait, said to the genital organs of one of his female companions who had annoyed him:

"Tell us what is going to happen."

"You will all be killed to-morrow," answered a rumbling voice from the organs, to the great amazement of everybody.

So it transpired. The hostile raiders surprised the watchers the next day and only one escaped to tell the tale.

The place has since been known as, "Where It Spoke." It was long ago deserted.

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human beings, in the beginning of time when they were semi-supernatural, sometimes prevailed against him. One story actually records his murder. From the point of view of morality, an angle from which the Bella Coola themselves do not regard him, *Ałquntăm* is neither moral nor immoral; he has the virtues and vices of a man. That, in fact, is a fair summing up of *Ałquntăm*; he is a superman, creator of life, supreme god in the sense that he is chief of the supernatural beings, but not an all-powerful deity.

Compared with *Ałquntăm*, other supernatural beings are insignificant. The Bella Coola do not regard them as a hierarchy with definitely graded rank and power; accordingly, the order in which they are described is immaterial. Reference has already been made to the supernatural Carpenters.[9] There are four of them, created by *Ałquntăm* in the beginning of time; it was they who constructed the mountains and rivers of this land, the animals and birds populating them, and supervised the making of mankind. They are considered to be four brothers, collectively known as *Mesmesälănux*.

The eldest and most powerful is *Yulătimut*, "He Who Completes Any Task with a Single Smoothing Motion."

The second brother is *Mătłăbălitcak*, "He Who Completes Any Task with a Single Stroke of an Adze."

The third brother is *Mälläpexwak*, "He Who Completes Any Task with Two Strokes of His Adze."

The fourth and youngest brother is *ałałulăk*, "He Who Completes Any Task in a Single Day."

In Kimsquit, *Mătłăbălitcak* is often called *Mesmesälănux* and the collective term is not used. These names explain the beliefs of the Bella Coola with regard to the powers of the Carpenters. After their work in the beginning of time, the three younger brothers returned to *Nusmăt·a*, where they have since resided, but *Yulătimut* came to earth and married a Bella Bella woman. The Bella Coola admit that members of this

[9] Cf. Boas, p. 32.

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tribe are superior to themselves in carpentry, and ascribe their skill to the fact that many of them are descendants of *Yulā-timut*. Some of the coastal tribes are said to believe that *Älquntäm* erred in the manufacture of many of the sea mammals, giving them, for example, human heads on fish bodies; he later rectified this by sending his Carpenters to adjust their form. This is not a Bella Coola belief. One elderly man stated that the skill of the Carpenters in painting and modelling was derived from a little girl named *Qaxtanoo*; no confirmation could be obtained for this statement and the information was vague and unreliable.

Since their creation of the sky and many features of this world, as well as birds and animals, the Carpenters have entered but little into the lives of the Bella Coola. Like other supernatural beings, they are capable of going anywhere, but for many generations they have not been seen on this earth. Their most important function, perhaps, is to act as patrons for various *kusiut* dancers. This subject will be described in detail in vol. II, chap. 1; for the moment it is enough to say that many supernatural beings regard members of this semi-sacred society as their protégés, and grant them power to perform dances. On these occasions masked figures are used to represent the patrons, thus enlightening uninitiated persons as to the appearance and attributes of various supernatural beings.

Among the many residents of *Nusmāt-a* are two sons of *Älquntäm*, *Sänolkxmulelts Älquntäm* and *Sno'elxelts Älquntäm*. The former in particular is dearly loved by his father and is often spoken of as *Nuslexwanuxwdam*, "The Cherished One." These two beings take no part in the affairs of mortals except as patrons of *kusiut* dancers. Like all supernatural beings they are considered to be immortal. Since *Älquntäm* has two sons it is to be assumed that he has, or had, a wife. Her name is not generally known, although she is sometimes spoken of as *Nusmāt-aien-a*, "The Woman of *Nusmāt-a*." There are also many stories describing his amours with human women resulting in semi-supernatural offspring.

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NEB Bellacoola NEB

encountered on land, but the sea likewise is the home of anthropomorphic creatures. Far beneath the surface is a land much like the earth, inhabited by people resembling humans who sometimes assist a drowning person. The mysteries of this undersea world are known to the Bella Coola chiefly through accounts handed down from generation to generation, though its inhabitants have often appeared at the surface. Their hair is long and somewhat reddish, their bodies are hairless, and their faces are in many cases stained with black. One man stated that about three years before a Japanese, fishing near Namu, had caught in his net one of these people, a girl about two years old. He drew her into his boat, where she squatted on the bottom, docile and submissive. After a time the fisherman became frightened and threw his captive overboard. The Bella Coola say that the Bella Bella, greater seafarers than themselves, have more extensive knowledge of these undersea dwellers.

Similar, if not identical, beings live beneath rivers and lakes; they have often been seen on the surface, and occasionally, long, long ago, certain fortunate individuals saw their houses. Accounts of such are embodied in Bella Coola mythology and will be described later. The following can be considered an example of a simple type:

About three hundred years ago, *Lewumewumlaix*, a Kimsquit fisherman, built a pier-like framework, projecting into the Dean River, on which to stand while fishing for salmon with a long-handled[14] scoop-net. One August day he was using his net when, after a number of successful sweeps, it became very heavy. As the net came to the surface he found, to his amazement, that a small boy was hanging on the rim. A number of people who had been watching from the shore, called to him to throw away his net with its uncanny haul. Heedless of this advice, *Lewumewumlaix* tried to lift his net and, on finding it too heavy, began to draw it through the water so as to drag it out on the shore. All went well for the first few yards, till suddenly the boy shoved against the net, pushing the fisherman into the water on the other side of the pier. Immediately the supernatural one vanished from sight. As the bystanders rushed to

[14] The handles of nets of this type are said to have been about thirty feet in length.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

556 with the objects back on the fire. In some cases four sets of
575 cloths are used. This rite, which is regarded as very impor-
783 tant, frees the lads from the supernatural powers with which
789 they have been endowed, and permits them finally to leave the back-room and return to normal life, just as their earlier cleansing freed them from the *tutwinam*. During their period of seclusion no initiate can perform a *kusiut* ceremony of any kind. The supernatural beings of the two societies, though closely akin, are yet independent, and it would be unthinkable for a man to enter into contact with the two at the same time, unless he should be the owner of a rare prerogative enabling
[424] him to do so. Only a few men have the right, which un-
[177] doubtedly was derived either from the Bella Bella or the people of Rivers Inlet.

556 X pays the functioning *siki* with new clothing. This com-
575 pletes the whole ceremony. The guests either return home or
[465] adjourn to some other house where a potlatch is taking place, but no rites mark their departure.

556 Such, then, are the principal features of the Bella Coola
171 potlatch. Without making a careful comparison of its features with those of neighbouring tribes, the following points stand out with great clearness:

(1) The basic concepts of the potlatch in Bella Coola are the same as those of the rite practised elsewhere on the coast.

(2) A potlatch has not the same importance at Bella Coola as it has on other parts of the coast, especially among the Kwakiutl. All informants stated repeatedly that they did not
[186] carry their potlatches to the same lengths as did the "foolish" Kwakiutl, nor were they as keen financiers. A Bella Coola would never entirely impoverish himself by lavish giving.

(3) The potlatch, though fundamentally the same as it is elsewhere on the coast, has certain rites characteristic of the locality. The central Bella Coola feature, the return of a dead ancestor, is not equally important elsewhere. It would be interesting to be able to trace the history of this. The most

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

In one case where an orphan woman, without relatives, repurchased herself by her own arduous labours, the announcement was made: 553 556 583

"Y's belt has come to rebuy her."

The reference was to the manner in which she had looped up her clothing with a belt when working. If Y's father should die after amassing goods to repurchase her, they are used for the purpose intended and the announcement is:

"Y's father's anus has come to rebuy her."

The ancestral family descended from the first settlers at *Snulle·tl* have the prerogative of singing a special song as they rebuy one of their daughters. This was used by their first ancestors on a like occasion. The theme is: [424] [533]

"I, I, I am the highest of you all. No one of you is capable of doing what I can accomplish. You all live on what I void."

The significance of this last sentence is that the village of *Snulle·tl* is farthest up the Bella Coola River. Its inhabitants used to claim that the people of the other villages lived on the refuse which they threw into the river, a source of pride to them. [186]

After announcing the various relatives who have rebought Y, the presents are counted and carried into X's house. The statement concerning their number, who has given them, and for what purpose, is repeated to the foreign guests there assembled, and they are then piled indiscriminately in a large heap for future distribution. At this juncture X calls out:

"Come in, come in," as though he were welcoming arrivals from a distance.

Y's relatives enter, and the ritual of the potlatch continues in the manner already described. The origin myth in which Y's new name is embodied is related in considerable detail, especially its recent history, that is, by whom it was last used and any pertinent items connected with its transmission. If she has received several names from different myths, each is similarly expounded.

As has been said, many women's names have been created 551 553

I:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NEA Bellacoola NEA

587 carried out *in toto*, since the repurchasing has wiped out the original expenditure. This is not necessary in the case of elderly widows or widowers. It is considered fitting for a widow or widower to wait for at least six months before re-
[186] marrying. The Bella Coola say that in Bella Bella wives are willed, as if they were slaves.

586 In spite of the efforts made to ensure the stability of marriage by elaborate ceremonies and repeated exchange of presents by the two families, divorce is not unknown. Due to the decay of Bella Coola culture, it is now the rule and not the exception. It was difficult to obtain satisfactory data concerning its prevalence in the old days. Unquestionably every effort was made by both families to keep together a husband and wife who had been wed with due ceremony, but it is evident that these attempts were not always successful. If a husband deserts his wife, or she him, and refuses to return, it is considered that the marriage contract is at an end. The usual grounds for desertion on his part are childlessness, inability of the wife to help at potlatches, and habitual faithlessness. Continued cruelty and neglect are the usual reasons for a woman abandoning her husband. These factors seem to have governed divorce in years gone by, as well as at the present time. The most unfortunate consequence, in the eyes of the Bella Coola, is the stigma it casts on the children. The younger ones normally remain with the mother, those older use their own discretion, and sometimes pass back and forth from one parent to the other. Both mother and father continue to take an interest in their welfare, and a child can receive prerogatives from either, irrespective of which he is living with. None the less, there is a sentimental bar against the children of a divorced couple who can be shamed by a reference to the marital faithlessness of a parent. This factor, combined with the difficulties, financial and otherwise, between the two families, explains the efforts made to prevent divorce and the odium with which it is regarded. Of course, if husband and wife are poor persons or slaves, married without elaborate

1:McIlwraith E-9 (1922-1924) 1948
NEA Bellacoola NE6

palm of one hand. The conspirators had been hoping for such an indication, since it gave the information to the brother who was peering through a crack. The younger sister persuaded the older one to hold up her palms to the fire to warm them, thus giving the brother an opportunity to shoot through a knot-hole in the wall of the house. His arrow transfixed his sister's hand and she fell, helpless, whereupon he entered and slew her.

The surviving brother and sister abandoned their home and travelled for a very long time without seeing anyone. Finally, they settled on a mountain top and married. Since that time Carvers have married their sisters.*

[186]

THE MARRIAGE OF *Thintpilēn·a*'s DAUGHTER

Long ago, when the world was still sparsely populated, there were two poor orphans, a brother and sister, quite alone, without relatives. The boy, who was about eighteen years old, took great care of the girl. In summer, when the people scattered over the country in search of food, the two went together to catch and dry salmon for the winter. The brother had great success. He caught many fish which he suspended on a frame to dry, in charge of his sister, while he went away for four or five days. On his return all the drying salmon had disappeared.

[251]

"That is unkind of my sister," he said to himself, "to have eaten all those fish so greedily."

He went to bed without saying anything, but next morning asked her: "Is it you who have eaten all our food?"

The girl replied in a frightened whisper:

"Don't speak to me about it. I am terrified. A supernatural woman stole it. I think it was *Thintpilēn·a*. I heard something approaching and hid myself. A huge woman came to the drying rack, her snout-like mouth ranged among the fish and sucked them down like lightning, while her teeth rattled as if they were loose in her jaws. She went away as soon as she had finished our salmon."

Next morning the boy bade his sister hide, as he was going to attack the robber of his food. He prepared a bow with a strong arrow and took up his position in ambush overlooking the rack on which hung the salmon he had recently caught. Soon he heard a voice and presently *Thintpilēn·a* appeared, wearing a shaman's collar of dyed and undyed cedar-bark on alternate bands, plentifully sprinkled with eagle down. Her teeth rattled loudly in their sockets. When near the rack, her mouth formed itself into a snout with which she began to suck in the salmon with a horrible

*This statement is undoubtedly a mere expression of Bella Coola contempt for their neighbours.

2:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

Several Bella Coola were questioned concerning the Cannibal spirit which Boas has described for the Kwakiutl. Some had never heard of such a creature, others had vague knowledge concerning it, and two men were able to give it a name. The one called it *Bāxbāxqwanōlcīwa*, the other *Bāxbāxqwaiwa*. All informants agreed that this creature was not a part of the Cannibal rites of Bella Coola and one man suggested that the cannibalistic incubus rendered it unnecessary. The Bella Coola believe that this Cannibal spirit is used in Bella Bella. During 1923 there came to Bella Coola an old Kimsquit Indian who had left his home many years ago and had since been living at Smith Inlet(?). With him came his son, a grown man, who had inherited from his mother a Kwakiutl Cannibal prerogative which he displayed in the winter of 1923-4. After the dancer had, theoretically, returned from the regions above, a large masked figure representing *Bāxbāxqwaiwa* entered through the front-door. As the singers beat time, it hopped to and fro, up and down, with snapping beak. The Bella Coola were intensely interested, and one had only to listen to their remarks when wondering what it might be, to be convinced that the Cannibal spirit is a strange concept to them. The most frequent hypothesis was that it was a *Ăaoĥăo*, since the masked figure did resemble this supernatural bird. The Bella Coola greatly admired the dance, and were by no means ashamed to confess their inferiority as dancers to the Kwakiutl. After the disappearance of the masked figure, the singers sang the Cannibal's song and he danced in normal fashion, which was commented upon as another difference in custom.

575* 796* 776 [171] [171] [428] [424] [186] [171]

THE SCRATCH DANCE

Only less awe-inspiring than the Cannibal dance is the Scratch dance. Those *ĥaĥuxiat* who have this prerogative are able to scratch the bodies of their fellows, so that long, bloody weals result. The privileges and restrictions of Scratchers are closely akin to those of Cannibals, as the following points show:

575* 424 [796]*

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6
Carrier NE7

WAR WITH THE CARRIERS

B C 648 721

The only other people with whom the Bella Coola came into frequent conflict were the Carriers. Some of the latter used to spend the winter among the coastal tribes, and had even intermarried with them to a considerable extent, but their mode of life was so different that they were always viewed as foreign in thought and outlook. The Bella Coola despised them for their dirtiness, their fondness for unsavoury food, and, above all, for their ignorance of *kusiut* and *ssaok* matters. This distrust was mutual and not infrequently led to bloodshed. Owing to the location of the Carriers, they could not be reached by canoes, and the Bella Coola had no liking for long overland journeys. The mobility and relative lack of permanent villages made it difficult to bring the Carriers to bay, so that warfare between them and the Bella Coola usually took the form of a killing followed by a raid for revenge; continued hostility was virtually unknown. The people of the lower villages were scarcely affected, but in former times there seems to have been a considerable amount of intermittent fighting between the inhabitants of the upper valley and the Carriers living east of them.

B [186]

B [484]

B C 648 726

The following account, claimed to be historical, describes what was said to be a typical raid, followed by a counter-attack.

On one occasion all the young people of *Sxaxl*, *Nuklis*, *Xstlu'an-i*, and *Sxaistli* went on a picnic to a large, clear tract of ground up the valley, where they spent their time, playing and singing. Towards nightfall two young men, who had not come with the others, drew near cautiously until they could call a girl who was a friend of one of the two. She slipped off quietly from her companions and passed the night with her lover and his comrade in the woods. Towards dawn a party of marauding Carrier Indians swooped down on the sleeping picnickers who, unarmed and unprepared, could make no resistance. With the exception of two pretty girls carried off as slaves, all were slain. The three who had been in the woods hurried back to the villages with the news.

The men of the four towns prepared for action. They went to the picnic ground and brought back the corpses for burial, thus learning for

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
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142 144 [302] sally used but the older people state that beards were by no means rare in former times. Careful inquiries were made concerning the ancestry of a man, about seventy years of age in 1922, whose curly beard suggests that he must be a half-breed, as indeed he is assumed to be by the white settlers of the valley. His father was *Pottes*, the most influential chief of recent years, his mother was herself the daughter of an important chief. None of the older men had ever heard the slightest rumour of faithlessness on her part. There were white [648] traders on the coast at the time of his birth, and intercourse with [567] slave women and others of low family was not uncommon, but [622] it would have been difficult for a chief's wife to misconduct herself, and still more difficult for her to conceal all knowledge of it in view of the open life which prevailed at that period. Moreover, it is said that *Pottes* himself had a similar beard, as did also the parents of several men who in 1922 were fifty or sixty years of age.

142 144 826 [302] Although the possibility of white mixture cannot be overlooked in the case of this one individual, one must not disregard the opinion of the people themselves on hairiness in general. They are proud of it and regard beards and moustaches as marks of virility given to them by *Ălquntäm*; baldness and lack of facial hair are considered a sign of weakness. They aver that their fathers and grandfathers were even more [186] hirsute than they. Furthermore, they point out with pride that this is a difference between themselves and the tribes of the interior, who are, as they say in scorn, "hairless like Chinamen." Finally, it is noteworthy that the hair on the head of many Bella Coola is wavy, or even curly (see Plate 20), instead of straight as among the majority of Indian tribes.[2]

Character

181 It is an almost impossible task to describe briefly the characteristics of a people. Those of the Bella Coola have

[2] This characteristic has led the writer to wonder if it could possibly have been caused by Ainu mixture.